I Love Ya to the Core

By: DisneyFanatic2364

Since the Timberwolf incident, Applejack hasn't been feeling well. She can't eat, she can't sleep and can't concentrate on her work. Little does she realize that she's suffering from the deadliest disease of all: love.

Status: complete

Published: 2013-10-07

Words: 4507

Rated: Fiction K+ - Language: English - Genre: Romance/Angst - Characters: [Applejack, Spike] - Reviews: 60 - Favs: 151 - Follows: 50

Original source: https://www.fanfiction.net/s/9747064/1/I-Love-Ya-to-the-Core

Exported with the assistance of FicHub.net

I Love Ya to the Core

Introduction
I Love Ya to the Core

I Love Ya to the Core

It seems that after I finish an extremely long Fluttercord fic, I write an Applejack one-shot.

Applejack did not know what was wrong with her.

For the past few days, she had not had a wink of sleep. She would lie in bed all night, unable to enjoy the pleasures of Dreamland. No matter how tired she was, her eyes would stay open!

That was why she could not concentrate on her work. She kicked back her legs and lost her balance, not realizing she was standing too far from the tree. After picking herself up, she moved closer and kicked the trunk weakly. It was only enough to shake one apple out of the tree, which just so happened to land on the cowgirl's head.

"Ow," she muttered with indifference.

Her eyes were so weary and about to drift closed when the sound of the triangle alerted her.

"Soup's on, kids!" Granny Smith called from the house. "Lunchtime!"

Applejack groaned and slowly made her way down the hill. By the time she got there, the rest of the family had already started on the daisy sandwiches.

"What took you so long?" Applebloom asked before swallowing. "You usually beat us to the grub!"

"I'm just a little slow today," Applejack mumbled, taking a seat at the table.

"Here ya go, hon!" Granny Smith exclaimed, handing her granddaughter a plate.

"Thank ya, Granny, but...I'm not hungry."

Big Macintosh had been drinking a glass of water and spat it out once he heard this. Applebloom nearly choked on her sandwich. Granny Smith let out a gasp.

"You're not hungry?!" she repeated. "Are you sick or somethin'? I'll go get the thermometer!"

When the elderly pony returned, she found Applejack snoring into her food.

"Gland sakes! Has she been overworkin' again?"

Big Macintosh shook his head. "Nope."

"Not more than usual," Applebloom declared.

"Applejack!" Granny Smith said, shaking the mare's shoulder. "Wake up, hon!"

Applejack's head shot up. "Wha...huh?"

"You were sleepin' like a bear in hibernation! I don't know what you been doin' to get ya so tired, but ya need to giddy up to bed this instant, young filly!"

The cowgirl reflected on her actions the past few days and nodded. "I guess I've been workin' too hard. Goodnight, y'all."

Ironically, she did not fall asleep the minute she climbed into bed. Even after two hours of tossing and turning, she was still awake.

"What is wrong with me?!" she asked herself aloud.

There was a knock on her bedroom door.

"Come in," she said wearily.

As the door opened, Applejack slowly turned her head. Standing there was her dragon friend Spike, holding a bowl in his claw. The sight of him brought a smile to her face and she suddenly did not feel so groggy anymore.

"Hey, Applejack," he greeted.

"Howdy!"

Applejack blushed at how loud that had come out.

"Applebloom told us you were sick," Twilight said, "so Spike suggested that we stop by."

The cowgirl had not noticed the unicorn until she spoke and felt guilty about it.

"What do you have, anyway?" Twilight inquired.

"Nothing, really," Applejack explained. "For some reason, I just can't get enough sleep."

"You haven't been overworking again, have you?"

"Why does every pony...? No. I swear. In fact, I'm so dang tired I can hardly bring myself to do any work! I just don't know what's wrong with me!"

The unicorn used her magic to bring a book out of her saddle bag. "Well, I brought a medical journal. Maybe we can figure out what's ailing you." She began turning the pages rapidly. "Hmm, let's see... What other symptoms are you experiencing other than fatigue?"

Applejack took a moment to think about it. "My appetite's been lackin'."

"Uh huh. Anything else?"

"Sometimes I feel all awful and then all fluttery the next minute."

"Mood swings. Got it. Any morning sickness or vomiting at all?"

"No."

"Oh, thank Celestia," Twilight said under her breath. "Any aches, pains of any sort?"

"Sort of. In my chest and stomach."

"Right. This might take a while."

While Twilight was searching through her book, Spike lifted the bowl he had been carrying to Applejack's view. The bowl contained a thick orange liquid with apple slices laid out on top.

"I made you some apple soup," Spike declared.

Applejack sat up as the dragon placed the bowl on her lap.

"I didn't know there was such a thing," she said.

"Well, since you like apples so much, I looked through the library's cookbooks and found a recipe for apple soup."

"Wait." She looked at the dragon in panic. "You cooked?"

"Yeah."

He watched her expectantly to eat the soup. Applejack only stared at it.

"Oh," Spike said with a blush. "You probably need a spoon, don't ya? I'll be right back."

"Well, it can't be pneumonia..." Twilight uttered.

The dragon was true to his word and returned a few seconds later with a spoon. Applejack took it in her hoof and examined it closely, making sure it was not bent or spit on or anything. Then she looked back down at the soup.

She shuddered at the memory of last week when Spike had baked that pie. She had not tasted it herself, but Rarity's reaction could only make her imagine. What if eating this soup made her even sicker?

There was also the fact that she was not hungry.

On the other hoof, it was sweet of Spike to make this soup for her, even taking the time to find a recipe. She was touched at the fact that he knew her favorite, even though it was obvious to everyone.

He had even gone to fetch a spoon for her, and in good condition too.

The cheerful look in his bright green eyes and his caring smile pushed her decision.

Hesitantly, Applejack took a spoonful of the soup and raised it to her lips. She closed her eyes, preparing for the worst as she sipped it carefully. Her eyes widened at the taste.

"Spike," she breathed. "This...this is delicious!"

She then began ravenously scooping the contents of the bowl into her mouth. Spike grinned excitedly.

"I knew you'd like it!"

"Have you broken any ribs lately?" Twilight asked out of the blue.

"Nope," Applejack replied as she prepared to dump the entire bowl down her throat.

She paused at remembering Spike was watching her. Suddenly, she became self-conscious and put the bowl down. She picked up the spoon again and ate slower.

"It can't be a heart attack," Twilight noted. "You'd be dead by now."

Spike gasped. "Twilight, what a thing to say!"

"Sorry. I'm just exploring all the things that could be causing these symptoms."

The unicorn tilted her head when she noticed how much of the soup Applejack had eaten.

"Hey, I thought you said you had lost your appetite."

The cowgirl looked down at the almost empty bowl. She shrugged.

"I guess it's back?"

Twilight glanced back at the journal. "Heart failure? No, can't be that

either."

"This is really good, Spike," Applejack said again, taking another sip. "What'd you put in here? Cinnamon?"

Spike nodded. "Also some saffron and a pinch of paprika."

"I'm impressed, considerin'..."

"Considering what?"

She bit her lip. "Nothin'."

Applejack looked at the dragon strangely as he took her pillow out from behind her and started fluffing it.

"What are ya doin'?"

"Just making your pillow more comfortable," Spike said, carefully putting the pillow back in place. "Maybe the reason you can't sleep is because your bed feels like rocks. Here, let me test it for you!"

She yelped as he jumped onto the bed. She snatched her bowl so it would not spill. Spike lightly bounced on the mattress.

"Seems soft enough," he confirmed. "I guess the bed's not the problem, unless you're secretly a princess or something and there's a pea under your mattress."

Applejack chuckled. "I think the chances of an ordinary pony like me bein' a princess are as likely as a villain like Discord becomin' a good guy!"

Spike snickered. "Or...or maybe as likely as...as..." He scoffed at his idea. "If there was this alternate universe with all of us in it, but we were...some other creature like...penguins!"

The two laughed so hard, one of them was sure to bust a gut. Applejack could not remember the last time she had laughed like this.

"Angina?" Twilight wondered. "No, I don't think so."

"Besides," Applejack said, wiping a tear. "Don't ya have to be an alicorn to be a princess? Imagine! Me with a horn and wings!"

Spike started giggling again as the cowgirl flapped her forelegs and spoke in a high-pitched voice.

"Oh, look at me! I'm a pretty pony princess with pretty little wings and a magic horn!"

The dragon bowed to her and spoke in a Canterlot accent, "What does her majesty wish of me?"

Applejack snorted and used a similar accent. "Oh, my hooves are so worn out from...walking! Could you give them a rub, peasant?"

"As you wish, my lady!"

He lifted the corner of the blanket and reached for her left hoof.

"No, Spike, I was just..."

But as soon as his claw made contact with her hoof, it acted as a shutdown button for the mare. She sunk into her pillow as he gently rubbed it. It reminded her of when he had scratched her back last week.

She snapped out of her trance and pulled her hoof away.

"Seriously, Spike. I was just kiddin'."

Spike blushed with embarrassment as he pulled the covers back over her. Applejack suddenly regretted telling him to stop.

Twilight slammed her book closed.

"Well," she declared, "I have no idea what's ailing you."

"It could just be one of those bugs," Applejack suggested.

"I'm afraid the only advice I have for you is to try to get some sleep. Come on, Spike."

The cowgirl's smile faded as the dragon hopped off the bed. "You're

leavin'?"

"You need your rest," Twilight explained, "so we'll get out of your mane."

Spike was about to follow the unicorn out the door when he paused.

"Oh, wait!"

He walked back to the bed and picked up the empty dish. His eyes then met Applejack's, making the mare blush.

"By the way," he said, "about last week...with the Dragon Code thing..." He rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly. "I made a big mess of things, didn't I?"

The mare grinned and patted his head. "It's okay, Sugar. You were just tryin' to help."

"Yes, but I don't know why I was so clumsy! I'm not usually like that! Just ask Twilight! I...I didn't mean to..."

"Take it easy. I'm not mad at ya. It was just one of those days."

Spike smiled in thanks. "Well, I hope you get better soon. See ya!"

When he closed the door behind him, Applejack felt a wave of sadness, but also pleasure. She found herself smiling like an idiot. Her chest no longer ached, but was all warm inside.

She fell back on the bed and grinned up at the ceiling. It did not take long for her to drift to sleep.

Everything was in sepia tone and piano music was playing. Applejack was wearing a lacy southern belle gown, which made her cringe. She gaped when she saw a terrifying Timberwolf towering twenty feet above her. She tried to run, but her hoof was caught between two rocks. The Timberwolf opened its mouth, but no sound came out. A title card appeared, reading: *ROOOAAAR!*

Applejack dramatically lifted her foreleg to her head and opened her mouth in an empty scream.

Some pony, help me! I am a damsel in distress!

The Timberwolf was about to snap its incredibly large jaw at her when Applejack heard sound for the first time:

"Fear not, my sweet! I shall save you!"

Applejack and the Timberwolf looked up the hill and saw Spike in a Mountie's uniform, riding on Twilight. As soon as Applejack locked eyes on him, everything instantly turned to color.

The dragon cried out as he snapped the reigns on the unicorn. Twilight neighed and charged down the hill. She skitted to a halt between Applejack and the beast. The Timberwolf roared furiously at the hero.

Spike smirked and picked up a pebble. "Eat rock, you cur!"

He tossed the stone into the Timberwolf's mouth. The creature put his claws to his throat as he choked. Spike hopped off Twilight and picked up a stick. He used it to pry the rocks out of the ground and free Applejack's hoof.

Spike jumped back onto Twilight and Applejack leapt happily into his arms. Despite the fact that she was so much bigger than him, he was able to hold her. As they rode off into the sunset, the Timberwolf exploded behind them.

Spike tugged on Twilight's reigns, bringing her to a stop. He then looked at Applejack with admiration in his hypnotic green eyes.

"My hero!" Applejack exclaimed, swinging her forelegs around his neck. "How can I ever repay ya?"

He smiled. "One kiss would be worth all the money in the world."

Applejack batted her eyes as he leaned forward, his lips puckered and...

The crow of the rooster woke Applejack from her slumber. She sat up in bed with a start.

She had dreamt of Spike. They had almost kissed.

"Where in the hoof did THAT come from?!"

She remembered something similar like that happening a long time ago. While Spike was fantasizing, he suddenly leaned in to kiss her. She had laughed and jokingly called him "Lover Boy."

Oh, but if I had let him kiss me...

"Stop it!" Applejack shouted.

The cowgirl hastily got out of bed and began pacing around the room.

"Calm yourself, Applejack. You're overreacting. It was just a crazy dream."

Then again, aside from the silent movie atmosphere and the cheesy outfits and the Spike riding valiantly to the rescue and the two of them flirting, that had actually happened. Spike had saved her life when she was unable to escape the Timberwolf, quite nobly too.

And he was so brave...

She shook her head wildly. "Ugh! This is crazy! So he saved your life! Big whoop! It's not like he wasn't heroic before that! After all, he did get the Crystal Heart to Cadence and saved the Crystal Empire. Golly, the way he fearlessly climbed that tower..."

She groaned. "WHAT'S HAPPENIN' TO ME?! Spike's your friend. Ya shouldn't be talkin' about him that way! Besides, it would never work! You're a pony, he's a dragon, an adorable one at that...NO! Be realistic! You're just grateful that he saved yerr life!

"Yeah, that's it. There is no way. There is no way in the wide world of Equestria that you are in lo...!"

She froze in place and then realized what she was saying.

Then she thought about it: the misery, the lack of appetite and sleep, the constant flushing in her cheeks, the sudden pain in her chest that would soon change to warmth, the sick feeling in her stomach that would flutter a few seconds later. All that had been going on within the past week.

Since the Timberwolf incident.

Then he came to visit her and suddenly the sick feeling was gone. She was laughing, she was blushing (she hardly ever blushed!), she was smiling like a fool.

All because he was there.

The thought of him made her feel bubbly again and she found herself daydreaming about his luminous green reptilian eyes, his adorable little face, his purple scales that went so well with his green spines.

Her eyes widened as realization came to her.

"Oh, Celestia," she breathed. "I'm in love with Spike!"

She slumped her rump to the floor.

When had this happened? Was it because he saved her life? Was it because he was so sweet and courageous?

Applejack!

Her ears perked up at the sound of his voice. She panicked at the thought that he had come back. She did not want to see him. Not when she was like this!

Applejack, I can't thank you enough for this great blanket! I really needed a new one!

She then realized the voice was in her head. It was a memory from Spike's birthday party, when he was thanking her for her gift. And he had hugged her.

Come on, Spike, she heard her voice say. *You've already thanked*

me fifteen times. I'm startin' to get a little embarrassed.

Then she had pushed him away. *Why did I do that?!*

She gasped. "Sweet Celestia, I *am* in love with him!"

Applejack started pacing again.

"No, no, no. This can't be. We're different species! Who's ever heard of a pony and a dragon?"

Haven't you heard of Beauty and the Beast?

"Shut up!" she commanded her inner voice. "Different or not, he's also what? Applebloom's age? That's a big age difference!"

Not too big. It's not like you're old enough to be his mother.

"Hush! It would never work! I'll bet he doesn't even think of me that way!"

He saved your life, didn't he?

Applejack was about to silence her conscience again, but stopped in her tracks. She remembered when Spike was repaying his debt for her saving his life and how clumsy he had been. She knew from Twilight that Spike was a good assistant. So why was he screwing up around her?

Maybe he...

Applejack sat on her bed and clutched her pillow to her chest. For a moment, it was Spike she was holding in her forelegs and he was returning her embrace. She smiled at the memory of his arms around her and closed her eyes as she fell back on the mattress. She held the pillow tighter, squeezing it affectionately.

She suddenly frowned and opened her eyes.

She loved him. She loved him *bad* . There was no use denying it. She was in love with him. Maybe she had always loved him. She just did not realize it until now.

"What do I do now?"

Should she tell him? She did not want to ruin their friendship, but the idea of hiding it from him did not sit right for the cowgirl. No, she had to be honest with him. Even if he did not share her emotions, at least he would know. Maybe he would help her get over it then.

Then she grinned, wondering if he did feel the same. Why else would he be a clutz when he was around her? Why else would he bring her soup when she was sick?

"Slow down, AJ," she chuckled. "He was probably just being a good friend."

Still, it was a possibility.

She sat up in bed excitedly. Yes, she was going to tell him. Today. She was going to march right down to that library and confess her feelings for him!

She had one hoof on the ground when another thought occurred to her. In her excitement, she had forgotten one significant factor:

Rarity.

Spike was in love with her. Every pony knew that. Applejack felt a pang of jealousy as she recalled how Rarity had kissed him on the cheek several months ago.

A part of her told her it was not an issue, for Rarity did not seem to return the boy's affections. In fact, she sometimes treated him unfairly: using him as a pin cushion, having him take out the trash, taking advantage of his generosity.

Applejack felt guilty thinking about her that way. Rarity was her friend. She was a little fussy sometimes, but she had a good heart. Maybe she did have feelings for Spike but was just afraid to admit it, thus it only looked as if she was leading him on.

"I wouldn't do that," she said aloud. "I wouldn't have him doin' things for me. I mean he does do things for me, but I never ask him to."

What if Rarity did have feelings for Spike? Would she get hurt if Applejack came clean?

She did not know what to do.

The cowgirl rose from her bed and walked out the door. Maybe Granny Smith would have some advice.

The elderly pony was clearing up the dishes from breakfast. One place was still set for Applejack.

"There ya are, Sleepy Head!" Granny Smith exclaimed once she saw her weary granddaughter. "What kept ya so long? Yerr brother and sister already finished!"

The younger mare sighed as she took her seat.

"Granny Smith, can I talk to ya about something?"

Her grandmother saw the distress she was in and sat down beside her. "What's wrong, hon?"

Applejack took a deep breath. "Granny, I think I'm in love."

The older mare stared at her for a moment and then leapt out of her seat.

"Yippee! I knew it! I knew it! Why, with all the not eatin' or sleepin', I figured that's what the problem was! Oh, I thought I'd never see the day! I was gettin' worried! Tell me! Who's the lucky stallion?"

Applejack bit her lip. "I...I'd rather not say."

Granny Smith pouted. "Alright, be all secretive and stuff."

"What do I do, Granny?"

"Ya tell him how ya feel, of course! Is this fella a friend of yerrs?"

Applejack nodded. "One of my best friends."

"Is it that Rainbow Dash fella?"

The cowgirl put her hoof to her head. "For the last time, Granny! Rainbow Dash is a girl!"

"If ya say so," the older pony winked.

"I thought of tellin' him how I feel, Granny, but...I'm afraid."

"You shouldn't be afraid. If ya love the boy, he has a right to know. And as purdy as you are, I'll bet he likes ya just as much!"

Applejack blushed slightly and then frowned.

"But what if...he likes some pony else? What if...he really cares about this mare and that mare happens to be yerr friend? What if...she likes him too? What do you do then?"

Granny Smith's smile faded. She rubbed her chin as she pondered. Then she looked at her granddaughter seriously.

"Nothin'."

Applejack blinked. "What?"

"Absolutely nothin'. If he already has a special some pony, there's nothin' you can do about it. And don't think of tryin' to steal him away. That just ain't right, especially if the girl is yerr friend."

The cowgirl hung her head. Her grandmother was right. Spike loved Rarity. That was that. She could not do anything about it.

"You're right," she nodded. "I won't say nothin'. If he loves some pony else, it's best to keep quiet."

She fiddled with her fork. "Besides, it's probably just a crush anyway. I'll get over it."

She jumped as she heard the front door open.

"Applejack?"

The cowgirl's face went red. *No, not now!*

There he was, standing in the doorway, a bowl of soup in his claw.

He smiled brightly at her.

"Oh, good! You're up! I brought you some more apple soup in case you were still feeling under the weather. How you feeling now?"

Applejack was so stunned she could not find her voice. She just stared at the dragon, her mouth slightly open.

He was so adorable. His scales glinted in the morning sunlight, his eyes radiated like emeralds, and his smile...it made her blush like a filly.

Spike was confused at her silence.

"Uh, AJ?"

"Huh?" Applejack said, snapping out of her trance.

"I asked: how are you feeling?"

"Oh, I'm..."

She felt like telling him right there. He had to know. Keeping this to herself was dishonest. She wanted to wrap her forelegs around him and finish the kiss they had almost shared. She wanted her dream to come true.

She had not realized just how much she wanted him, until now.

"I'm fine," she squeaked. "Just...just fine."

She had lied.

Granny Smith glanced between her granddaughter and the dragon and gave a knowing smile.

"Well, I'll leave you two lovebirds alone then."

Applejack gasped and her cheeks grew redder. She was about to insist her grandmother to stay, but she was gone before she knew it. Spike raised an eyebrow as he approached her.

"What was that all about?"

"Uh..." She laughed nervously. "Oh, you know Granny Smith! Always cracking a joke!"

She gulped. Why was it suddenly so hard to talk to him?

Spike looked at her suspiciously. "You sure you're alright?"

No.

"Yes!" Applejack choked.

He did not buy it. "You know, AJ, if there's anything bothering you, you can tell me."

I love you!

"There's nothin' to tell ya!" she insisted.

"Oh. Well, if you ever need to talk about something, just know that you can always come to me."

Gosh, Spike! Why do you have to be so sympathetic?

"Anyway," Spike said as he put the soup on the table, "even though you're not sick anymore, I made you some more soup."

"You shouldn't have," Applejack said in a cracked voice.

She tensed as he touched her foreleg with his soft claw. He smiled warmly at her.

"That's what friends do for each other, right?"

If only he knew what he was doing to her.

"Yeah," she gulped. "Friends."

"Well," the dragon said, "I better get going. I have to do my morning chores. I'll see ya later!"

Applejack waved her hoof weakly. "See ya."

As soon as he was out of sight, she looked down at the soup. Who

knew how many hours he had spent slaving over the stove making this? A part of her told her it was a sign that he cared, while another part said it was only because she was his friend.

Suddenly, Applejack lost her appetite. She buried her face in her hooves.

"I'm doomed."

I felt I had not fully explained AJ's feelings towards Spike in my previous fanfics. And oh wait! Did I actually write a fanfic WITHOUT Fluttercord? That's a first.

The reason for this is that I wanted to practice writing Applejack, because she's the main character in my next story. Part of this was based on my own unrequited romance and my mom gave me similar advice on the matter. I hope you liked this.